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the immediate action of their constituents at home, or of the jingo newspapers which are so loud in condemning them.

What makes the action of Congress so unworthy of the nation and its history is as much the manner of its action as the needlessness thereof. A matter of the gravest moment, both for the present and the future, involving millions of money and the possible loss of many thousands of lives, with numberless other attendant misfortunes, was rushed through with the relentless haste of a lynching mob. No time was taken or allowed for discussion. Members asked for time—had to ask permission to exercise their constitutional right of speech—to express their opposition to the course being pursued. They were howled down and forced into silence. And all this in the name of humanity, liberty and independence!

If we believed that Congress, either in the matter or the manner of its recent action, represented the great masses of the people of the nation, we should greatly despair of the future of the country. We believe just the contrary. The President's policy was the policy which the people wished pursued. The President ought to have stood by it and have let Congress bear the sole responsibility of the course which it took. We refuse to believe that the spirit of vengeance or the desire for war, so apparent in Congress, were the prevailing spirit of the nation. Multitudes of men and women in all parts of the land will look with profound sadness on the spectacle of our country plunging headlong into war with Spain, when a little more patience and self-restraint might have won a great and bloodless victory for humanity.

If thou hadst known, O Congress, even thou, in this thy day, the things which make for thy honor! But now they are hidden from thine eyes!

War in the Blood.

"War in the air." This expression has often been heard during the past weeks of excitement. It has been uttered as if it were an explanation of the extraordinary phenomenon, which we have been compelled to witness, of a great multitude in the nation shouting impatiently, almost angrily for a war of vengeance, of punishment, against Spain.

What does "war in the air" mean? Who put it there? Whence came the feverishness, the growing

conviction that war was inevitable, that it might as well be plunged into first as last? How did it happen that, as time went on, people who at first were opposed to war and talked vigorously against it, finally threw away their opposition and went over in multitudes to the side of those who were clamoring for it and seemed fascinated at the thought of it?

This was a noticeable feature of the development of events from the time of the report of the Maine court of inquiry to the time of the arrival of Consul-General Lee in Washington and the ignominious scene in the House of Representatives a little later. The intellectual and moral convictions of many persons seem to have given way under the pressure of some influence of which they could have given no account to themselves. The desire to fight, or rather to have somebody else fight, to have vengeance for the Maine, to have a vast bloody spectacle on land or sea, spread widely over the nation. People began even to talk of a righteous, a "holy" war, out of respect no doubt to their consciences which would not be altogether still. We do not include in this class many who all along believed that the United States had a solemn duty to perform in putting an end to Spanish inhumanities in Cuba. This class of citizens, whatever may be thought of their reasoning, had no disposition to glorify war, or to rush recklessly into bloodshed.

This degeneration of sentiment,—for it was nothing less,—was not brought about by the pressure of public opinion. Public opinion, at least as shown in private conversation where men spoke out their true convictions, was more opposed to war with Spain than in favor of it. This larger, better part of public sentiment was everywhere indignant at the unblushing conduct of the sensational papers and spoke out against it in tones of the severest condemnation. But as time went on, and the negotiations with Spain tarried, and war preparations increased, and the war party in Congress became more and more aggressive, the numbers of those who believed that a peace policy ought to be followed out consistently to the end and that in this way the wishes of this country in regard to Cuba might be attained, became fewer and fewer.

To say that "war in the air" brought this on is to say nothing. The truth is that it was war in the blood, sowed thick there a generation ago. One might be inclined to attribute the phenomenon to the

original animal instincts of the race, which had suddenly re-asserted themselves over all the moral gains of centuries. This original animalism does sometimes curiously come out unexpectedly in individuals, in families, even in social groups of considerable size. But it does not seize whole sections of civilized nations and throw them into one vast violent fit of brutalistic desire, when there is no sufficient motive for their action in the inciting circumstances.

When the civil war broke out in 1861, the instincts of the people were largely peaceful. The Mexican war fought beyond our borders had produced but little effect on the character of the nation, so largely was it condemned at the time and subsequently. The people born during the Revolutionary period and that of 1812 were largely gone and a new generation was living who knew next to nothing of actual war. When the civil war came on, the people of the nation, except that part of it which had been affected by slavery, went into hostilities with the greatest reluctance. The interests at stake were very great. The national unity was involved. Yet the people did not want war. They did not believe war possible in any serious way. There was no jingoism then, nothing which could properly have been called by this detestable name.

But from the firing on Fort Sumter thirty-seven years ago, for four years the entire people were filled with the excitement and frenzy of war. Sectional feeling was bitter and persistent. Hate and violence everywhere abounded. Peace principles were despised; peace men were declared to be traitors and cowards. Children drew in war at their mothers' breasts; boys and girls heard war at the family table; war flamed in the headlines of the papers; the pulpits of the nation preached war; the schools were full of war feeling. For more than a dozen years after the war closed, the passions and recriminations of the war continued, and had only in recent years begun to die away.

How could we expect the children of that time, who have now reached maturity and middle life, to fail to exhibit the fruits of that which was so deeply and thoroughly implanted in them? We are simply reaping to-day the harvest of the warlike instincts which were then created or developed. This is the secret of our recent jingoism; it is the secret of the rapid degeneration of sentiment noticed above; it explains why the younger men in the nation are so

much more clamorous for war than the older men, especially the old soldiers, most of whom have had all they want of the bloody business, into which the nation entered so reluctantly in '61.

If we could have gotten through another decade or two without war, our jingoism would have died out. Perhaps we should have been able to keep our feet from the snare of European militarism, into which we have been in so much danger of falling. But a war now, if it lasts any length of time, is sure to re-create in the people warlike instincts the peril of which the nation will have to pass through a generation hence. At the close of it we shall not be ready to disarm as we were in 1865. All sorts of excuses will be found for keeping our navy large and our army larger than it has been. We shall find ourselves much farther along in the process of the militarization of the country, with less desire and less power to stop. Whatever justification people may make for a war against Spain in the name of humanity, the dangers here pointed out are of the most serious character, and we seem in danger of going headlong into them, with eyes deliberately closed.

Editorial Notes.

The annual business meeting of the American Peace Society will be held in Pilgrim Hall, Congregational House, 1 Beacon Street, Boston, on Monday, May 9th, at 2.30 p. m., to elect officers for the coming year, to receive the reports of the Board of Directors and of the Treasurer, and to transact such other business as may be brought before the meeting. A full report of the Annual Meeting will be given in the June number of *THE ADVOCATE OF PEACE*. It is to be hoped that there will be a large attendance of the members. The cause for which the Society has so long stood and labored demands unusual attention because of the peculiar crisis through which the nation is passing. The Society desires greatly to enlarge its work during the coming year, and hopes that every member, in whatever part of the nation he lives, may put forth special efforts at the present time to promote the principles of peace and goodwill in all the scope of their application. There are many persons in all parts of the country who are in hearty sympathy with the purposes of the Society, and would be glad to become members if their attention were called to its work. Will not all those who are already members make it a special duty to try to induce others to become members? All who can do so are earnestly solicited to make contributions to the funds of the Society, to enable it to distribute a much larger number of its publications.